charge of the post offices. Ask him how it happens that the officers get letters every day, and we, the simple people, get none? He knows the answer. Did he not tell the mailmen to deliver mail only to the educated people? He must think we can wait. Is this fair, comrades?"

Then Raskolnikov and Roshal spoke in the name of the local Soviet, describing it as the true stronghold of the revolution. Trotsky had the last word. I had heard and seen him many times in Petrograd, but never as close as on Yakor Plaza. He was of middle height but seemed tall when he spoke. There was something commanding and at the same time something evil, diabolic, in his angular features. His voice was strong and clear, an ideal voice for an open-air harangue. I listened to him and tried to figure out whether he was sincerely obsessed with the ideas he was preaching and really was a visionary of the revolution, like Lenin, or a shameless demagogue.

Greeted with an ovation, he spoke of blood and violence as a necessary expression of the will of the people in a revolution. "The fine gentlemen in the Tauride Palace think they can make a revolution by negotiating and compromising with the enemies of the people. I tell you, heads must roll, blood must flow, there must be no mercy if we want to win! The strength of the French Revolution was in the machine that made the enemies of the people shorter by a head. This is a fine device. We must have it in every city, and, first of all, here in Kronstadt!"

This was cold-blooded, deliberate instigation to murder. Trotsky realized, of course, that the sailors of Kronstadt would not erect the guillotine on Yakor Plaza. His reference to the French Revolution was an oratorical embellishment, and its essential objective was to wake the slumbering beast in the listeners while leaving to them the choice of victims and lethal techniques. While driving the crowd to frenzy, Trotsky himself remained completely cool, visibly enjoying the effect of his rhetoric. By the end of his peroration, all my doubts were dispelled. I was listening to a brilliant faker for whom the revolution was a stage for the display of his talents and acquisition of power and fame.

I returned to Petrograd sick and disgusted. On the same day the Kronstadt Soviet passed a resolution breaking relations with the Provisional Government. "From now on," it stated, "the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers is the sole authority in Kronstadt. On questions of national importance, it will deal directly with the Petrograd Soviet."

The Executive Committee summoned the leaders of the Kronstadt Soviet to Petrograd to explain their resolution. Headed by Raskolnikov and Roshal, the delegates arrived on June 2. They explained that the resolution was an expression of the views of the Kronstadt Soviet but did not change the political status of the city.